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One Germany, Two Worlds of Housework? Examining Single and Partnered Women in the Decade after Unification

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One Germany, Two Worlds of Housework? Examining Single and Partnered Women in the Decade after Unification*

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Running Head: Housework of Single and Partnered Women in Germany

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One Germany, Two Worlds of Housework? Examining Single and Partnered Women in the Decade after Unification

Despite much recent changes in gender relations, housework remains an area where women bear primary responsibility. This paper examines the role of policy and employment context on housework, not only for women who live with partners, but also for single women. I study German women's housework in the decade after unification, which allows me to simultaneously assess the impact of the ideological legacies of the FRG and the GDR, while also studying the role of different levels of labor market participation. I find that women with partners do more housework than singles, and that part-time employees do more housework than those working full-time. The results show no regional differences in singles' housework performance. However, among women with partners, West German women do significantly more housework. The analyses reveal that differences in the housework levels of full-time and part-time workers can be explained by the differences in mechanisms for the two groups. Full-time workers reduce their housework in response to their paid labor involvement to a lesser extent than part-time workers, in particular in East Germany, where women's full-time employment has long been normative.

One Germany, Two Worlds of Housework? Examining Single and Partnered Women in the Decade after Unification

The fall of the "iron curtain" and the end of state socialism in Eastern Europe radically changed Europe in the mid 1990s. Amid the dramatic changes that occurred, Germany stands out as a special case as the unification process resulted in a rapid adoption of the institutional and economic settings of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) in the area of the German Democratic Republic (GDR). This resulted in fundamental economic and social changes; the former FRG and GDR had markedly different sociopolitical systems, with a market based capitalist system in the FRG firmly integrated in the western world and heavily regulated state socialism in the GDR aligned with the Soviet Union. As such, Germany is a special case that allows the investigation of social processes in one country with uniform legal and policy structures, yet very different institutional legacies.

In this study, I examine women's housework in the united Germany. Housework is an important aspect of gender inequality that shapes not only couple relationships but also individuals' well-being (Cubbins and Vannoy 2004; Frisco and Williams 2003). Research on domestic labor has established the while essentially a private activity, housework is shaped by context (Cooke 2006; Fuwa and Cohen 2006; Hank and Jurges 2007), and individual level mechanisms that influence housework can change their meaning across contexts (Cooke 2006). [Self-reference omitted] compares the mechanisms that shape the division of labor across liberal, conservative, and social democratic welfare state regimes, and found that housework is most unequal in conservative countries, West Germany being the prototypical example for this regime type. On the other hand, Batalova and Cohen (2002) find evidence that some mechanisms that

predict the division of labor may work differently in Eastern European countries compared to Western Europe.

The differences between the two parts of the two Germanys encompassed fundamental differences in the economic systems that also resulted in very different positions of women workers in both regions. However, the regional differences and their consequences were not restricted to the institutional and economic realm. Out of the two systems arose ideologies that differed in particular with respect to the role ascribed to women. In the former West Germany, the prototypical conservative welfare state, women were characterized as primary caretakers of the household and there was strong support for the male breadwinner-female homemaker model. In the socialist economy of the GDR there were no incentives for women to specialize in domestic production – to the contrary, women's labor market participation was expected.

One of the keys to explain gender differences in household labor lies in men's and women's different labor market position. Fuwa's (2004) study that suggest that in former state socialist countries the effect of women's employment on the domestic division of labor is weaker. This paper further differentiates between full-time and part-time workers, another important distinction that has not been given enough attention in previous treatments of housework. These two groups may have very different self-perceptions regarding their role at home and in the work place, so it should not be assumed that housework is shaped by the same mechanisms for both of them. The centrality of employment in shaping domestic labor and the fact that levels of employment continue to be different between East and West Germany, suggests that comparing housework in East and West Germany may provide very useful insights.

In sum, studying Germany offers a unique case of enough differences to understand the importance of context for shaping housework, while both regions share enough similarities to

make a detailed comparison meaningful. This study extends existing comparative work on women's housework in three ways. It provides the first longitudinal assessment of regional differences in women's housework in Germany spanning the decade after unification. Second, existing studies have focused on women in relationships, excluding single women. Assessing the housework of unpartnered women is crucial to fully understand the way housework impacts women, in particular the link between paid and unpaid work. In this paper, I compare the housework of employed women both living single and with a partner for both regions of Germany. Third, I introduce a novel comparison of housework mechanisms between full-time and part-time workers across contexts, to distinguish between the impact of time worked for pay, level of labor force participation, and structural context on housework.

To this end, I examine unpaid domestic labor for part-time and full-time employed East and West German women using data from the 1991 through 2001 waves of the German Socioeconomic Panel Data (GSOEP). In the remainder of this paper, I present established explanatory approaches to housework allocation and discuss in more detail the role of context focusing specifically on the example of Germany.

Determinants of Housework: Two Established Approaches

Housework as "Rational" Arrangement: Time Availability and Resources

While women have traditionally been primarily responsible for domestic labor, there is variation in how much housework they actually do. One line of research argues that the allocation of domestic work is based on *time availability*. Becker (1991) argues that the domestic division of labor reflects rational arrangements between partners who specialize in either domestic or market production, based on evaluations of potential earnings of both partners in the

labor market. According to this theory, household labor is not explicitly gendered, but is a function of time and effort spent in the paid labor market. Although the notion of the complete specialization of the breadwinner-homemaker arrangement as "most rational" option has been challenged (Oppenheimer 1997), it is widely accepted that that time in the labor market and the subsequent time available for doing housework are key determinants of household labor arrangements.

This approach is intuitively very appealing. The more time is "used up" by employment, the less time is dispensable for housework. This has been empirically confirmed for example by Baxter (1992) who finds that women's labor force participation decreases the number of hours they spend on housework (see also Bianchi, Milkie, Sayer, and Robinson 2000; Coltrane 2000; Shelton and John 1996). Previous research is limited to married and cohabiting women, but the time availability approach is also applicable to single women, whose disposable time is limited by the hours they spend on their jobs.

Apart from time limits as a major determinant of housework, others have brought forward the idea of domestic labor as a result of women's bargaining power. Higher levels of socioeconomic resources are seen as being associated with power in the bargaining process for (less) housework. Consequently, the partner who contributes more money may feel that this contribution excuses him (or, less frequently, her) from housework. If a partner does not earn enough money to support him/herself (and potentially his/her children) independently, the lack of bargaining power can be seen as a form of dependency (Sorensen and McLanahan 1987). Because of their weak bargaining position, fuelled by their perception that they cannot "afford" do leave the relationship, these "dependent" partners (usually women) may end up with a disproportionately high level of housework.

While the relative resource model only applies to partnered women, more available (absolute) resources may translate into investments in time-saving equipment, and outsourcing of household tasks, such as cooking, cleaning, and laundry for women with and without partners[1]. In my analyses, I will not only replicate establish findings regarding the rational explanation of housework, but also extend existing research to singles. Only through comparing single women to partnered women is it possible to shed light on the role of relationships in shaping gender inequality on a societal level.

Housework as Gendered Arrangement

The time availability and resource approach are grounded in rational choice theories of individual behavior. However, domestic labor is not entirely based on negotiation processes and rational calculations. If women earned more than their partners, this would not automatically lead to men doing more housework. The assumption of women's primacy in taking on domestic responsibilities is firmly rooted in traditional gender role expectations. Women's domestic work has also been conceptualized as a way of "doing gender." Accordingly, women consistently do more housework than men, be it as a consequence of gendered socialization or out of an active effort to affirm their identity (South and Spitze 1994). There is evidence that entry into a heterosexual union increases women's time spent on housework while simultaneously reducing men's, which suggests that doing gender is reinforced by a traditionally gendered context (Gupta 1999; South and Spitze 1994). Shelton and John (1993) find that not merely the presence of male partner increases women's housework, but the "the presence of a husband." Baxter (2005)

[1] This study does not investigate the extent to which more resources are associated with more living space and consequently more demand for housework, in particular cleaning. Also, this paper does not assess to what extent housework is outsourced. However, residences in Germany are typically much smaller than in the United States and hiring help such as cleaning personnel is less common.

suggests that the “incompletenesss” of cohabitation as an institution allows for more flexible negotiation of domestic roles among partners in these unions, leaving more room for equal sharing and resulting in lower levels of housework for cohabiting women. Evidence for more flexibility in task assignment in cohabiting couples was also found by Cunningham (2005).

However, these processes are not easily observed, and it is therefore difficult to measure the concept of “doing gender” in quantitative studies directly. Survey data cannot adequately capture the motivational processes that compel women to use housework as way to reaffirm their femininity. It is also difficult to gauge the extent to which socialization may have shaped a sense of responsibility for taking care of domestic tasks to a larger extent than their male partners. Even though the underlying motivations cannot easily be observed, it is still possible to derive empirical expectations from the “doing gender” approach. This set of ideas suggests that motherhood and marriage will make women’s traditional role expectations more salient. Thus, mothers and wives are expected to do more housework, as they want to fulfill the expectations of femininity associated with these statuses. Of course, motherhood may also be associated with additional work because children increase the need for cooking, cleaning and other chores. However, the doing gender approach would suggest that the symbolic performance of housework is particularly prevalent among married mothers, compared to single mothers. With this design, I can explicitly test this “partner hypothesis:”

H1: Partnered women, especially those who are married, perform significantly more housework than single women even if other characteristics are the same.

Housework in Germany: One Country, Two Contexts

The two main theoretical approaches outlined above have been studied in depth, and recent research has started to integrate a comparative perspective into housework research. Comparative research that seeks to identify the effect role of context for individual level outcomes is often hampered by the difficulty of making meaningful comparisons of individuals across different country contexts. The German case is perfectly suited for a project with this goal, since there is a current unified set of institutions, with two different pasts and, as I argue, two different ideological legacies.

During their 40 year long separation, the separate regions recovered, rebuilt and progressed along very different trajectories. In the GDR, employment was seen as a mechanism to reduce gender inequality. Nevertheless, women were still assumed to hold the main responsibility for domestic tasks, based on the notion of women as workers *and* mothers (Adler 2002; Rudd 2000). This portrayal of women as *superwomen* in the socialist ideology had the goal to take advantage of as much of the workforce as possible, to improve the difficult economic situation of the GDR after the war. This notion also minimized the perceived need for men to adapt their roles and participate in domestic production. As a consequence of this ideology, women's employment was virtually required in the East during the Socialist regime, resulting in extremely high female labor force participation rates (Adler 1997; Künzler, Walter, Reichart, and Pfister 2001; Trappe 1996), with almost no difference in the labor market participation rates of married and unmarried women. However, the fact that East German women were expected to work full-time during the socialist regime did not mean that the expectations towards women's role at home were adjusted. State sponsored child care was readily available, but nothing else alleviated the burden of the work facing women at home.

Because women's position in society differed more markedly between the two states than men's, the political and economic upheaval following unification was particularly dramatic for them. In addition to the ideological differences and institutional transformation, the transition to a capitalist economy was associated with a deep economic crisis that pushed women out of the labor force. While the East Germany economy suffered a tremendous level of job loss, the labor market position of East German women was changed both fundamentally and permanently. The lack of employment opportunities together with incentives for women to reduce participation reduced East German women's labor market participation rates to about 74% down from almost universal participation among women of working age in the late 1980s and early 1990s. However, even though West German women's participation rates remained relatively stable over the years, around 61% (Trappe and Rosenfeld 2002), they were still significantly lower than in East Germany.

In linking the established explanations of housework with the regional characteristics, both the rational and the gendered models lead to similar expectations. East German women are more likely to be in the labor force, and more likely to work full-time. On average, they can be expected to make greater contributions to the household's income and have less time available for domestic labor, partly because the availability of childcare facilities enables them to work longer hours in paid work. Furthermore, East German women were not encouraged to base their female identity on their domestic labor; their integration into society occurred through both work for pay and work at home (Adler 2002).

Evidence on East German women's housework before unification is limited. We know that in both the FRG and the GDR women took on primary responsibility for housework, but there are indications that women had more "help" from their partners in East Germany, resulting

in a more "equal" division of labor (Cooke 2004; Künzler, Walter, Reichart, and Pfister 2001; Rosenfeld, Trappe, and Gornick 2004). Recent evidence on women who have a partner suggests that the time women spent doing housework is now nearly identical in both regions, 35 hours in the West, and 34 in the East, as detailed by (Künzler, Walter, Reichart, and Pfister 2001). However, the picture for single women's housework is unclear. The current similarity in women's housework patterns has been interpreted as an outcome of opposing trends towards more housework in East Germany and less housework in West Germany, or a trend towards more egalitarianism in the West, and a more "traditional" division of labor in the East (Künzler, Walter, Reichart, and Pfister 2001; Rosenfeld, Trappe, and Gornick 2004). Women's weakening attachment to the labor force is seen as a key factor responsible for this seeming convergence in the housework patterns. Adler (2002) finds that unification had a major impact on the way East and West German women conceptualized their work lives, but her evidence suggests that East German women hold on to the "double orientation" of combining work and family and show no signs of adopting the male breadwinner orientation.

While one post unification study found no clear regional differences in the level of housework (Künzler, Walter, Reichart, and Pfister 2001), the historical legacy still suggests that overall, East German women can be expected to do less housework than their West German counterparts. Even though theory suggests that this regional differential exists for all subgroups, I explicitly test the regional differences not only for partnered women, but also singles, and for full- as well as part-time employees.

H2: East German women do less housework than West German women.

Full-time and Part-time employment: Two worlds of Housework?

It is important to move beyond regional differences in housework, and to also assess the domestic labor performed by women at different levels of involvement in the labor market. Different levels of labor market participation may reflect the relative importance of paid labor compared to domestic responsibilities and family life. Depending on the relative importance of paid versus unpaid work, job hours and economic resources can have a different impact on women's housework patterns. If part-time participation is in fact a marker of women's priorities with paid work being secondary to domestic responsibilities, I expect that part-timer workers' housework is not elastic to their labor supply. In other words, even if they increase their hours in paid work, they will not reduce their time spent on domestic chores, since they are a priority for them. On the other hand, full-time workers, whose first priority is paid work, may only engage in unpaid work to the extent that their job allows it, and adjust their domestic labor depending on their paid work, regardless of context. Hypothesis 3 represents this "employment priority model":

H3: The tradeoff between paid work and unpaid work is stronger for full-time than for part-time workers.

While it is possible that the trade-off between paid and unpaid labor works the same way in both parts of Germany, there are theoretical reasons to expect differences. In their investigation of earnings inequality in the 1980s, Trappe and Rosenfeld (2000) find evidence that East German women's careers were less impacted by parenthood than West German women's. Along similar lines, the domestic division of labor in East Germany was rather uncoupled from women's market position. As a continuation of this legacy it can be expected that there is little trade-off between work for pay and unpaid domestic work. While there has been a debate about

the extent to which East German women welcomed German unification as an opportunity to embrace a more domestic role, Kolinsky (1998) finds evidence that only eight percent of East German women who are not employed consider themselves housewives. Furthermore, even though the availability and affordability of childcare dropped compared to pre-unification levels, child-care is still more readily available to East Germans compared to West Germans.

Counteracting this difference is the idea that full-time work may be felt as a departure from traditional femininity for West German women. If this is the case, these women may feel that they have to overcompensate for their market activities and not "take advantage" of their resources earned through paid work or reduce their housework time commensurate to their job hours. One may expect that their domestic labor is less coupled with their market work. As a result, the regional differences in the impact of paid work can be expected to only apply to women who work part-time, as stated in the "employment level hypothesis":

H4: There are no regional differences in the link between paid and unpaid work among women who work full-time. Among part-time workers, paid work has a stronger effect on housework for West compared to East German women.

Data and Methods

To test the hypotheses outlined above, I use the German Socio-Economic Panel (GSOEP), a representative panel study of private households in Germany. Data are collected annually on both the household- and person-level and each household member over age 16 is interviewed. Data collection in West Germany has been on-going since 1984, an East German sample was added in 1990. Each person moving out of an original sample household is followed, and each person moving into a sample household becomes a sample member as well. I restrict

my analyses to the years 1991 through 2001, for which full information on both regions is available.

I examine time spent on housework for employed women who are between the ages of 25 and 55 years of age[2] who are either single or have a partner living in their household. Singles who live with other adults and partnered women who reside in households of more than two adults are excluded. While investigating the housework of women who are permanently out of the labor force would be interesting, current theories do not necessarily provide a good framework for understanding variation in the time they spend on housework. The sample further excludes disabled women, those in the military, and is limited to women with positive earnings and positive number of job hours worked.

Dependent Variable: Housework time

Respondents were asked to indicate how many hours they spend in a typical weekday on housework[3]. This measure avoids the problem of double-reporting pointed out by Lee and Waite (2005) who suggest that reports of housework that are based on specific tasks overestimate housework time since multiple tasks may be completed at the same time. While time diary methods have many desirable qualities, the type of housework measure used in this study has been deems highly replicable (Juster, Ono, and Stafford 2003) and, unlike relative housework measures, can be compared as individuals' household composition changes. While reports of housework may be biased (e.g. respondents over-report their own housework and underreport their partner's housework), the impact of this bias on the results of this study are minimal, since

[2] This age ranges captures the time where women are most active in the labor market.
[3] Housework on weekends is not considered because this paper seeks to reflect women's housework burden during the week, when most of the paid work is performed as well. This will reflect the stress faced during the week, and also underestimates the total housework burden faced by female full-time workers. It is more relevant to consider total housework, both on weekdays and weekends, when comparing the domestic labor of both partners in a couple. Further, I do not examine time spent on childcare. While a demanding task, figuring prominently in the lives of family that have children, I choose not to investigate it since this activity is not performed by all women, in particular those who do not have children.

only women's own absolute housework time is taken into account. Examining time spent on housework rather than individual tasks, also circumvents the problem that the predictors of housework operate differently on traditionally feminine, masculine, and gender neutral tasks (Kroska 2004). To facilitate interpretation, housework time is recoded from hours to minutes. Time spent on childcare is not included in this measure as this project focuses on routine household tasks.

I focus on absolute housework time rather than the division of labor between partners in order to examine both women with and without partners[4]. This allows me to not only assess possible variation in the effect of economic context but also to examine possible variation in the impact of partnership status. While gender equality in both paid and unpaid work is important, I am most interested in the actual burden faced by women. Moreover, there is evidence that existing explanatory approaches are most effective in explaining women's actual time spent on housework (Kamo 1988); models explaining couples' division of labor are mostly driven in explaining women's housework, rather than men's participation. More importantly, by focusing on absolute rather than relative housework I can also include women who do not live with a partner, a group that is understudied in existing research on housework.

Independent Variables

In this project, I measure three different mechanisms that can potentially shape women's housework time. I distinguish between East and West Germany, and I include measures of the two dimensions of the "rational" mechanism of housework allocation, time availability and resources. To account for the gendered nature in doing domestic labor, I include measures of

[4] I also examined the determinants for women's relative housework for women with partners. It seems that for this outcome, household structure plays a less important role than when modeling women's absolute housework. Women's labor market situation and their earnings are also important determinants, but women's relative share of the household income is more central to shaping relative housework than it is for absolute housework.

family and household context. All of these factors included have been well established in the literature, but I advance this strand of research by specifically examining the regional variation in these mechanisms for both singles and women with partners.

They key indicator for *structural context* is the region where women first entered the sample, distinguishing between individuals who lived in the area of the former GDR and East Berlin, and respondents who live in the states of the former FRG. I limit my sample to women who still live in the region of Germany from which they were originally sampled: East German women who continue to live in East Germany, and West German women who live in one of the West German states. Since geographic mobility between the two regions is not very high, only a small number of respondents are excluded as a consequence of this restriction.

The *time availability* aspect of women's work included here is the number of hours worked per week. In later parts of the analyses I distinguish between full-time and part-time employees, using 30 hours per week as a cut-off line between full-time and part-time employment.

Resources are measured by two different indicators. One, women's share of the total household labor income, is only available for women who live with a partner. I further include a measure of a respondent's absolute earnings, which is available for all women in the sample. Since the earnings distributions are rather different in the two regions, I include the difference between respondents (log) earnings and the mean (log) earnings in their region of residence rather than the absolute earnings, which would be difficult to compare across the two regions.

I distinguish between women who are single, those cohabiting with their partners, and married women. As a further measure of the salience of traditional femininity, I include the

number of children in the household in the analyses. I also include a categorical measure of education and indicators for survey years as a control.

Analytic Strategy

To test the four hypotheses outlined above, I estimate random effects regressions of housework time on selected labor market characteristics, family structure and other selected controls. Random effects models are better suited for the research question on hand than fixed effects models, since one of the key aspects of this paper is the comparison of women and East and West Germany. Using random effects models allows me also model the effects of characteristics that are stable over time, such as region of residence[5].

Results

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 1 show that East and West German women in this sample exhibit regional differences in employment and earnings similar the differences discussed in the literature that motivated this study. Moreover, the differences I find also provide support for hypotheses 1 and 2: Partnered women do significantly more housework than their single counterparts, and East German women spend more time on domestic labor than West German women.

TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

Figure 1 illustrates the regional differences in housework over time. In all years, East German women, do significantly less housework than West German women, which further supports the regional difference hypothesis, hypothesis 2, and prior research on German women's household labor behavior. Contrary to results from earlier comparative studies,

[5] I performed Hausman tests for the East and West German sample that showed that there are no significant differences between the coefficients found in the random and the fixed effects models.

however, I do not find clear evidence for convergence in the levels of housework between the two regions over the years.

FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE

The multivariate results in Table 2 support the rational approach to housework, as time in paid work and financial resources reduce women's domestic labor. There is also clear evidence that housework is a gendered process. More children increase women's housework burden; furthermore, married women do significantly more housework than single women with otherwise identical characteristics. The results from the pooled analysis provide support that even after controlling for individual, household and labor market characteristics, East German women spend less time on housework than their West German counterparts.

TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

In a next step, I model housework separately for women in East and West Germany to see whether the mechanisms are similar in the two contexts and to assess the difference in average housework time in both regions, subjecting hypothesis 2 to a more stringent test. Table 3 illustrates that the mechanisms of housework allocation are remarkably similar across regions. Even though the size of the effects implies that domestic labor in East German is less affected by women's paid work, these differences do not reach statistical significance. The one clear regional difference is in the impact of children. More children increase housework to a greater extent in West Germany compared to the East. This highlights that the meaning of children varies regionally. The estimates do not support hypothesis 2. Even though East German women still do less housework than West German women, on average, this difference is no longer statistically significant, once the mechanisms predicting housework levels can vary regionally.

TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

In the past, unpartnered women have typically been excluded from research on housework, but in a next step, I differentiate between women with and without a partner.

FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE

Figure 2 suggests that, overall, women with partners do more housework than singles in both regions. However, there are no differences in the housework of East and West German singles. The East-West disparity in housework seems to stem only from the fact that West German women with partners do significantly more housework than their East German counterparts. This indicates that regional differences in women's housework behavior may be tied to family institutions, rather that by a direct impact of the policy context on women's individual ideology and preferences.

The multivariate analyses for women with partners are shown in Table 4. Children are associated with less additional housework in East Germany compared to the West, and while women's paid seems to have a smaller impact on their housework time in the East, this difference once again fails to attain statistical significance and hypothesis 2 is not supported.

TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE

For women without partners, on the other hand, there are no significant regional differences at all, as shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE

Next, I distinguish between full-time and part-time workers, as there is reason to believe that housework allocation mechanisms may differ depending on the relevance of paid versus unpaid domestic work that may be associated with women's work schedules. Figure 3 shows clearly that housework time differs markedly between the different levels of participation, which would be expected by the rational approach based on the difference in time spent outside of the home. More importantly, however, Figure 3 also suggests the regional differences in housework may be restricted to those working part-time. There are very limited regional differences in the housework time of full-time workers.

FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE

To further examine this issue, I estimate both the overall differences between full-time and part-time workers for both regions combined, as well as for each region separately, testing hypotheses 2 and 3[6]. The overall comparison of full-time and part-time workers[7,8] suggest that for part-time workers children are associated with more additional work. The estimates, however, provide support for hypothesis 3, which suggested that the effect of paid work on housework should be stronger among full-time employees. Part-time workers' housework time is also more affected by their resources, both absolute and relative, indicating that full-time workers are not as effective in translating their earnings power in less housework as part-time workers. The results further indicate that all of the differences in housework between full-time

[6] I also estimated the regional differences for full-and part-time worker for women who do not have a partner (results not shown here). As could be expected from the results in Table 5, for singles there were virtually no regional differences, and also there were very few differences between full-time and part-time workers within each region.
[7] Estimates are not shown here. I present only indictors for group differences.
[8] I did this by pooling East and West German respondents.

and part-time workers are explained by the differences in mechanisms and individual characteristics.

TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE

A further breakdown by region shows that, unlike in previous models, time, resources and household context do not shape women's housework time for all subgroups among women who have partners. For East German part-time workers, none of the established mechanisms seems to be a good predictor of housework time. The estimates provide limited support for hypothesis 4. There are no significant regional differences in the effect of paid work on housework among full-time employees. Moreover, the stronger impact of time in paid work on housework in the West among part-time workers suggests that paid work may in fact have a stronger effect on housework for West compared to East German women. Table 6 further shows that the differences between full-time and part-time workers within regions are only significant in East Germany, even though the direction of the effects is similar in the West.

Summary and Conclusions

This study investigates women's housework burden in East and West Germany and examines how paid work shapes their domestic labor using 10 years of data from the German Socio-Economic Panel. I expand existing studies of housework in Germany by not only examining the East West differences, by distinguishing between full-time and part-time employees and also examining single women's housework.

Among women who have partners, I find compelling evidence that time availability and the demand for housework created by residing in a household with children affect women's

domestic labor universally. For women with partners, resources operate in two distinct ways. Higher relative resources seem to in fact increase women's bargaining position and reduce their housework level in return. Furthermore, women who live with their partners may be able to reduce their housework by using their earnings to outsource household tasks, buy time saving appliances or maybe purchase prepared foods to reduce the time they need to put in at home.

For singles, neither time availability nor resource explanations are effective in predicting housework time, suggesting that new theoretical approaches are necessary. The finding that there is no link between absolute resources and single women's housework may suggest that single women maybe in more strained economic circumstances, so they may not have the "luxury" to outsource domestic labor.

In general, future studies should examine whether there is a ceiling effect in the way earnings reduce women's housework. It may be that increased earnings put women in a stronger bargaining position in couple households, enabling them to reduce their domestic labor input. But once a woman could theoretically be economically self-sufficient outside of a relationship, additional earnings may not further reduce their housework time. This seems particularly plausible since resources are not a factor in shaping single women's domestic labor.

In examining regional differences in housework, I find that they exist primarily among women who have partners. For those who do not live with a partner, there do not seem to be clear differences in housework performance between the two regions of Germany. Even though I find evidence that among partnered women West Germans do more housework, the mechanisms that determine housework seem to work very similarly in both regions. Only the presence of children has a much stronger impact on women's housework time in West compared to East

Germany. The effect of time worked for pay and financial resources are not significantly different.

The analyses also distinguish between full-time and part-time workers and descriptive evidence clearly shows that part-time workers do more housework than full-time workers. Moreover, multivariate results suggest that part-time workers increase their housework more in response to children compared to their counterparts who work full time. This means that women who work full-time are not as effective or able to translate financial resources in a housework reduction.

The picture is more complex if this is further disaggregated by region. The difference in the impact of children between full-time and part-time workers is driven by East German women, whereas the variation in the effect of resources is mostly due to the differences between West German women at different levels of participation. West German women who work full-time may perform a "disproportionate" share of housework to overcompensate for their non-traditional level labor market activity. But there is another explanation that is also more generalizable to East Germany, where working full-time has a long-standing tradition and should not feel defeminizing. When women have paid work as their primary activity, their earnings may be an integral part of the household economy and can only be partially "used" to reduce their housework burden. The stronger effect of earnings on domestic labor time for women working part-time may mean that their earnings are a "bonus" to the overall household income that may be spent in more flexible ways. The meaning of children differs between the two regions and some of the smaller housework burden imposed by children in East Germany may be due to the (still) superior child care infrastructure.

However, this hypothesis is based on the assumption that women's labor force participation is a reflection of their preferences. What is considered the "typical" level of women's employment differs markedly between East and West Germany. The legacy of GDR state socialism as well as the FRG breadwinner model is reflected in the current participation patterns. Full-time employment is still more likely in the East, while in the in the West part-time employment continues to be dominant. A "deviation" from the predominant participation patters as a reflection of constraints or economic necessity. West German women may work full-time rather than part-time to meet financial needs of their household. East German women's part-time work may be a reflection of a constrained labor market with a lack of available full-time jobs. Under this "constrained priority model", where participation level is a not a reflection of preferences, one would expect that:

Several concrete conclusions can be drawn from these results. East German women and those working full-time do less housework, but this is due to their individual characteristics. My analyses suggest that existing explanations cannot be easily extended to women who live without partners. This study also highlights that there are some limited regional differences with respect to the determinants of housework, most notably in the impact of children on women's time spent on domestic labor.

For those who do live with a partner it seems that the more established women's labor force participation is in a society, the less women may be able to reduce their housework time based on their paid work time. A "discount effect" may devalue the value of women's paid work it is taken for granted. This suggests a potential dilemma in looking at the future of gender stratification. A reduction of women's time spent on domestic labor is important both for reducing gender inequality in the home as well as to enable them to effectively pursue their paid

work careers. But the increased integration of women in labor force alone may not be able to achieve this goal, the underlying value system of task allocation within couples and families will have to be addressed as well.

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Tables

TABLE 1: SUMMARY STATISTICS

Variable	Mean	Std. Dev.	Range	East (Mean)	West (Mean)
All women					
Housework on Weekdays (in minutes)	135.44	78.03	0-720	121.23	149.85
East	121.23				
West	149.85**				
Single	103.16				
Married or cohabiting	140.22**				
Number of Children in Household	1.09	0.98	0-6	1.22	.94
Hours Worked/Week	34.56	12.45	0.5-80	39.34	29.72
No Partner[a]	0.13	0.34	0-1	.10	.15
Cohabiting[a]	0.03	0.18	0-1	.03	.04
Difference from Mean Annual Labor Earnings (within region) [b]	<0.001	12481.26	-18435-188523	<-0.001	<0.001
Partnered Women only					
Share of Household's Annual Labor Earnings	0.45	.25	0.001-1	.49	.39
Number of Observations	8213			4134	4079
Number of Respondents	1791			933	858

Note: ** Group differences are significant at the .001 level. [a]Omitted category is married. [b] in model estimation, the difference between log earnings and mean log earnings is included.

Table 2: Random Effects Regression on Housework, both regions

	Housework Time
No. of children in household	15.477**
	(12.95)
Cohabiting	7.088
	(1.38)
Married	10.180**
	(3.21)
Hours worked per Week	-1.289**
	(15.22)
Individual Earnings	-16.286**
	(11.26)
Share of Annual Household Earnings	-17.712**
	(4.47)
East	-16.801**
	(6.06)
Constant	217.982**
	(12.19)
Observations (number of respondents)	8213 (1791)

Note: Estimated models include controls for educational categories and survey years (not shown here), numbers in parentheses are t values based on robust standard errors.

TABLE 3. RANDOM EFFECTS REGRESSION RESULTS BY REGION

	Housework Time		
	East		West
No. of children in household	9.392**	†	20.211**
	(6.17)		(10.79)
Cohabiting	1.871		11.849
	(0.28)		(1.54)
Married	4.582		13.539**
	(1.12)		(2.80)
Hours worked per Week	-1.123**		-1.295**
	(10.28)		(9.81)
Individual Earnings	-12.480**		-17.543**
	(6.29)		(8.12)
Share of Annual Household Earnings	-11.917*		-22.051**
	(2.28)		(3.43)
Constant	172.744**		215.825**
	(4.97)		(9.57)
Observations (number of respondents)	4134 (933)		4079 (858)

Note: Estimated models include controls for educational categories and survey years (not shown here), numbers in parentheses are t values based on robust standard errors.

TABLE 4. RANDOM EFFECTS REGRESSION BY REGION (WOMEN WITH PARTNERS)

	Housework Time Women with Partners	
	East	West
No. of children in household	9.730** †	20.936**
	(5.97)	(10.41)
Cohabiting	-0.122	-0.180
	(0.02)	(0.02)
Hours worked per Week	-1.154**	-1.382**
	(9.97)	(9.58)
Log of Annual Labor Earnings	-13.265**	-18.515**
	(6.12)	(7.83)
Share of Annual Household	-9.334	-22.788**
Earnings	(1.64)	(3.46)
Constant	177.455**	229.389**
	(5.07)	(10.16)
Observations	3705 (854)	3450 (759)

Note: Estimated models include controls for educational categories and survey years (not shown here), numbers in parentheses are t values based on robust standard errors.

TABLE 5. RANDOM EFFECTS REGRESSION BY REGION (WOMEN WITHOUT PARTNERS)

	Housework Time Women without Partners	
	East	West
No. of children in household	10.398**	19.010**
	(2.62)	(4.90)
Hours worked per Week	-0.653*	-0.614*
	(1.98)	(1.98)
Log of Annual Labor Earnings	-10.444*	-6.867
	(2.13)	(1.40)
Constant	134.598**	124.804**
	(3.87)	(6.61)
Observations	429 (136)	629 (161)

Table 6. RANDOM EFFECTS REGRESSION RESULTS BY REGION AND EMPLOYMENT LEVEL (WOMEN WITH PARTNERS)

	Part-time		PT vs. FT	Full-time	
	East	West		East	West
No. of children in household	20.619** (4.70)	23.074** (8.31)	†	8.592** (5.06)	† 17.917** (6.63)
Cohabiting	14.212 (0.54)	0.929 (0.06)		-1.837 (0.28)	-2.108 (0.29)
Hours worked per Week	-0.060 (0.10)	† -1.661** (4.33)		-1.094** (6.55)	-0.999** (4.20)
Log of Annual Labor Earnings	-20.122** (3.79)	-20.754** (5.94)	†	-9.894** (4.05)	-11.549** (3.39)
Share of Annual Household Earnings	-10.821 (0.59)	-25.427* (2.43)		-5.959 (1.01)	-18.914* (2.46)
Constant	169.896** (3.78)	245.588** (7.99)		185.297** (5.24)	175.760** (4.67)
Observations	459	1808		3246	1642
Number of Respondents	214	495		793	439

Note: Estimated models include controls for educational categories and survey years (not shown here), numbers in parentheses are t values based on robust standard errors.

Figures

FIGURE 1: AVERAGE HOUSEWORK TIME, BY REGION

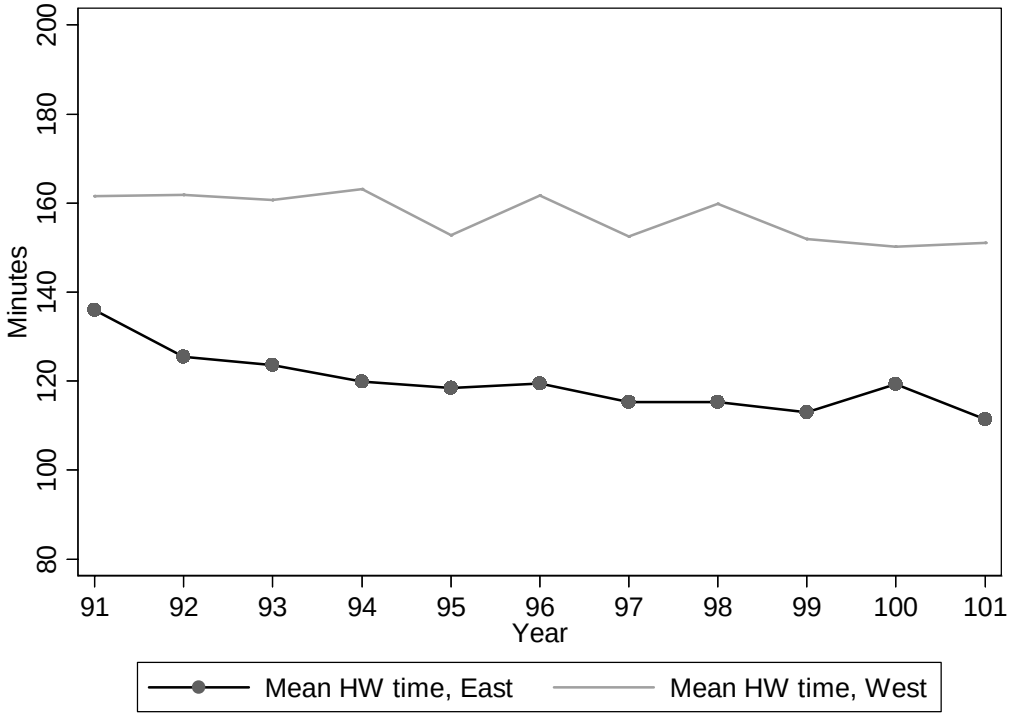

FIGURE 2: HOUSEWORK TIME BY PARTNER STATUS AND REGION

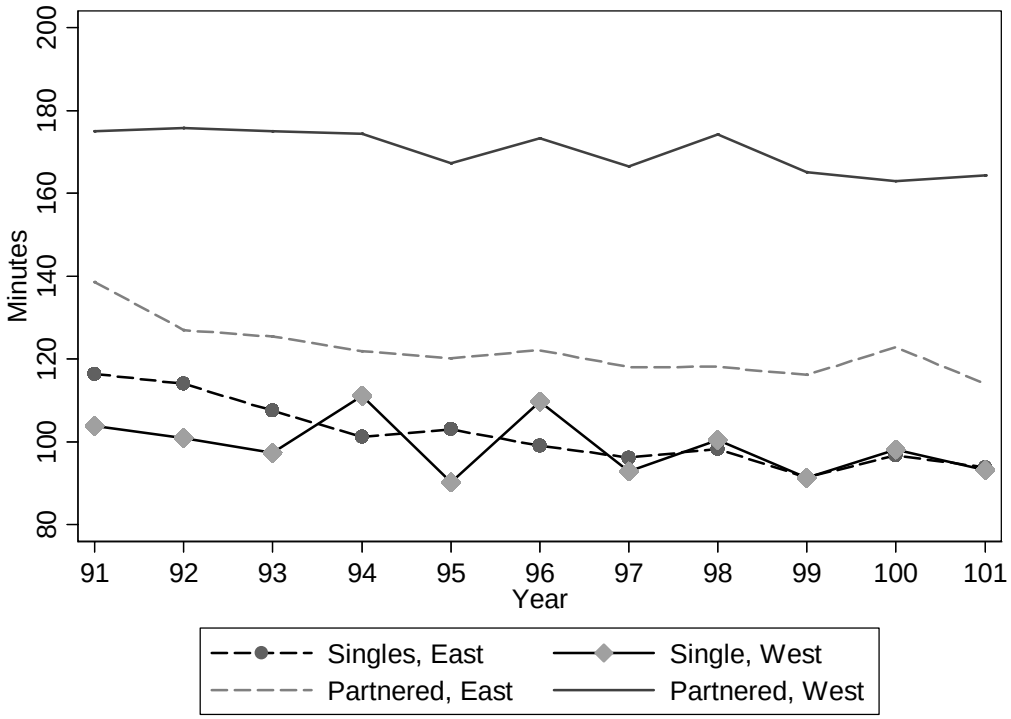

FIGURE 3. HOUSEWORK TIME BY PARTNER STATUS, REGION, AND EMPLOYMENT LEVEL